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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/967,108	09/28/2001	James M. Colemon	42390P12314	8096

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EXAMINER	
PHAN, JOSEPH T	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2645	

DATE MAILED: 01/12/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/967,108	COLEMON, JAMES M.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Joseph T Phan	2645	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *20 September 2004*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-31* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-31* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. Claim 22 objected to because of the following informalities: line 16 of claim 22 recites the phrase "; and". There are no limitations after the term so examiner will interpret the claim as the phrase not being there. Appropriate clarification or correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –
>
> (b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-31 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hurd, Patent #5,923,745.

Regarding claim 1, Hurd teaches a method comprising: receiving an incoming call at a voice mail port of a voice mail system from a connected private telephone switch, the telephone switch being coupled between the PSTN and a plurality of individual subscriber telephones the incoming call coming to the switch through the PSTN, the voice mail system having greeting and message storage for at least some of the plurality of individual subscriber telephones, the incoming call being directed to one of the plurality of individual subscriber telephones (Fig.1, col.5 line 56-col.6 line 21, col.10 lines 48-65);

receiving a call handle associated with the incoming call at the voice mail system

from the telephone switch (col.6 lines 22-39 and col.10 lines 53-65), receiving an indication from the switch of whether the call has been previously handled by the voice mail system, applying the call handle to a database of the voice mail system to retrieve caller information stored in the voice mail system database that is associated with the call handle, if the call has been previously handled by the voice mail system and using the retrieved caller information at the voice mail system to handle the call if caller information associated with the call handle is found; and asking the caller to enter personal selections if the call has not been previously handled by the voice mail system (col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 2, Hurd teaches the method of claim 1, wherein receiving a call handle comprises receiving a tone sequence at a port of the voice mail system decoding the tone sequence, and deriving the call handle from the decoded tone sequence(Fig.1, col.5 line 56-col.6 line 21, col.10 lines 48-65).

Regarding claim 3, Hurd teaches the method of claim 2, wherein the tone sequence is a DTMF tone sequence transmitted to the port over the same transmission line as the incoming call(Fig.1, col.5 line 56-col.6 line 21, col.10 lines 48-65).

Regarding claim 4, Hurd teaches the method of claim 1, wherein receiving a call handle comprises receiving a call handle message through a digital interface(Fig.1, col.5 line 56-col.6 line 21, col.10 lines 48-65; ISDN has digital interfaces and backplanes).

Regarding claim 5, Hurd teaches the method of claim 4, wherein the digital interface comprises a digital backplane connection to a switch from which the incoming

call was received(Fig.1, col.5 line 56-col.6 line 21, col.10 lines 48-65; ISDN uses digital interfaces and backplanes).

Regarding claim 6, Hurd teaches the method of claim 1, further comprising requesting data from the caller and storing received data in association with the call handle(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 7, Hurd teaches the method of claim 1, wherein using the retrieved caller information comprises providing audio information in a language previously selected by the caller(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 8, Hurd teaches the method of claim 1, if no caller information associated with the call handle is found, further comprising:
requesting caller information from the caller, storing received caller information in association with the call handle; and using the received caller information to handle the call(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 9, Hurd teaches the method of claim 1, wherein receiving an indication of whether the call has been previously handled comprises receiving an indication of whether the call has been forwarded from one of the plurality of individual subscriber telephones(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45; from another call center).

Regarding claim 10, Hurd teaches the method of claim 9, if the call has not been previously handled by the voice mail system, further comprising:
requesting caller information from the caller;
storing received caller information in association with the call handle; and

using the received caller information to handle the call(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 11, Hurd teaches a machine-readable medium having stored thereon data representing instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to perform operations comprising:

receiving an incoming call at a voice mail port of a voice mail system an from a connected private telephone switch. the telephone switch being coupled between the PSTN and a plurality of individual subscriber teleohones. the incoming call coming to the switch through the PSTN. the voice mail svstem having greeting and message storage for at least some of the plurality of individual subscriber telephones, the incoming call being directed to one of the plurality of individual subscriber telephones(Fig.1, col.5 line 56-col.6 line 21, col.10 lines 48-65);

receiving a call handle associated with the incoming call at the voice mail system from the telephone switch, receiving an indication from the switch of whether the call has been previously handled by the voice mail system(Fig.1, col.5 line 56-col.6 line 21, col.10 lines 48-65);

applying the call handle to a database of the voice mail system to retrieve caller information stored in the voice mail system database that is associated with the call handle. if the call has been previously handled by the voice mail system; and using the retrieved caller information at the voice mail system to handle the call if caller information associated with the call handle is found; and

asking the caller to enter personal selections, if the call has not been previously

handled by the voice mail system(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 12, Hurd teaches the medium of claim 11, wherein if no caller information associated with the call handle is found, the instructions, when executed by the machine, cause the machine to perform further operation comprising:

requesting caller information from the caller;

storing received caller information in association with the call handle; and

using the received caller information to handle the call(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 13, Hurd teaches the medium of claim 11, wherein if the call has not been previously handled by the voice mail system , the instructions, when executed by the machine, cause the machine to perform further operations comprising:

requesting caller information from the caller;

storing received caller information in association with the call handle; and

using the received caller information to handle the call(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 14, Hurd teaches an apparatus comprising:

a voice mail port to receive an incoming call from a connected private telephone switch, the telephone switch being coupled between the PSTN and a plurality of individual subscriber telephones, the incoming call coming to the switch through the PSTN, the voice mail system having greeting and message storage for at least some of the plurality of individual subscriber telephones, the incoming call being directed to one of

the plurality of individual subscriber telephones(Fig.1, col.5 line 56-col.6 line 21, col.10 lines 48-65);

a voice mail port to receive a call handle associated with the incoming call from the telephone switch and an indication from the switch of whether the call has been previously handled by the voice mail system, a memory containing caller information associated with call handles; and a processor to apply the call handle to the memory to retrieve caller information that is associated with the call handle and use the retrieved caller information to handle the call if the call has been previously handled by the voice mail system and to ask the caller to enter personal selections, if the call has not been previously handled by the voice mall system(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 15, Hurd teaches the apparatus of claim 14, wherein the voice mail system port to receive the call handle comprises a digital interface(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45; ISDN has digital interfaces and backplanes).

Regarding claim 16, Hurd teaches the apparatus of claim 15, wherein the digital interface comprises a digital backplane connection to a switch from which the incoming call was received(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 17, Hurd teaches a method comprising:

receiving an incoming call at a private telephone switch through the PSTN, the call being directed to one of a plurality of individual subscriber telephones that are coupled to the switch and generating a call handle for the incoming call at the telephone switch(Fig.1, col.5 line 56-col.6 line 21, col.10 lines 48-65);

routing the incoming call to a port of a connected call handling system, the call handling system having greeting and message storage for at least some of the plurality of individual subscriber telephones;

sending the call handle to the call handling system in association with the routed call;

sending an indication to the call handling system of whether the call has been previously handled by the voice mail system in association with the routed call (col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 18, Hurd teaches the method of claim 17, wherein sending the call handle comprises deriving a tone sequence for the identification, coding the tone sequence into tones and sending the tone sequence as a set of in-band signaling tones to the call handling system port(col.6 lines 1-12, col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 19, Hurd teaches the method of claim 18, wherein the tone sequence is a DTMF tone sequence transmitted to the call handling system port over the same transmission line as the incoming call(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 20, Hurd teaches the method of claim 17, wherein sending the call handle comprises sending an identification message through a digital interface(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 21, Hurd teaches the method of claim 20, wherein the digital

interface comprises a digital backplane connection to the call handling system(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45; ISDN has digital interfaces and backplanes).

Regarding claim 22, Hurd teaches a machine-readable medium having stored thereon data representing instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to perform operations comprising:

receiving an incoming call at a private telephone switch through the PSTN, the call being directed to one of a plurality of individual subscriber telephones coupled to the switch; generating a call handle for the incoming call at the telephone switch, routing the incoming call to a port of a connected call handling system, the call handling system having greeting and message storage for at least some of the plurality of individual subscriber telephones(Fig.1, col.5 line 56-col.6 line 21, col.10 lines 48-65, and col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45);

sending the call handle to the call handling system in association with the routed call;

sending an indication to the call handling system of whether the call has been previously handled by the voice mail system in association with the routed call(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 23, Hurd teaches the medium of claim 22, wherein the instructions for sending

the call handle comprise instructions which, when executed by the machine, cause the machine to perform further operations comprising sending an identification message

through a digital interface(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 24, Hurd teaches the medium of claim 23, wherein the digital interface comprises a digital backplane connection to the call handling system(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 25, Hurd teaches an apparatus comprising:

a port to receive an incoming call at a private telephone switch through the PSTN. the call being directed to one of a plurality of individual subscriber telephone that are coupled to the switch;

a call handle generator to generate a call handle for the incoming call at the telephone switch (Fig.1, col.5 line 56-col.6 line 21, col.10 lines 48-65);

a switching network to route the incoming call from the receiving port to a port of a connected call handling system, the call handling system having greeting and message storage for at least some of the plurality of individual subscriber telephones; and an interface to send the generated call handle and an indication of whether the call has been previously handled by the call handling system to the port of the call handling system in association with the routed call(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 26, Hurd teaches the apparatus of claim 25, wherein the interface comprises a digital interface(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 27, Hurd teaches the apparatus of claim 26, wherein the digital interface

comprises a digital backplane connection to the call handling system(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 28, Hurd teaches the method of claim 1, further comprising releasing the call to the switch and, after a sufficient time, deleting caller information associated with the call handle(col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 29, Hurd teaches the medium of claim 11, wherein the instructions further comprise instructions which, when executed by the machine, cause the machine to perform further operations comprising releasing the call to the switch and, after a sufficient time, deleting caller information associated with the call handle(col.12 lines 37-45).

Regarding claim 30, Hurd teaches the method of claim 17, further comprising releasing the call and, after a sufficient time, reusing the call handle for another call(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45)..

Regarding claim 31, Hurd teaches the medium of claim 22, further comprising releasing the call and, after a sufficient time, reusing the call handle for another call(col.10 line 66-col.11 line 53 and col.12 lines 37-45).

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-31 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joseph T Phan whose telephone number is 703-305-

3206. The examiner can normally be reached on M-TH 9:00-6:30, in every other Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Fan Tsang can be reached on 703-305-4895. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

JTP
January 7, 2005

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